

## THE CUCKOO.

Now This Season, Hostless Bird Gets Its Eggs Hatched.

A popular fallacy tells us that a cuckoo lays eggs in another bird's nest. She does not. She lays eight eggs on the ground. The eggs are in size, color, spots and shape in accordance with the information obtained, say, in Leigh Woods: Out of the eight eggs five or six would closely resemble the hedge sparrow's. The other two might be those of a tit, a wren or a linnet. Her male friends—about three or four to each lady—now come forward, select each an egg and carry it in its mouth to the nest of the prearranged foster mother. Only one cuckoo egg is placed in one nest. If he finds a cuckoo he seeks another cradle, knowing in a moment amid all the eggs present the cuckoo pedigree.

The deluded mother hatches the intruder with her own blood, and the intruder, having the faculty of being hatched sooner than the others, is of course the first to come out of his shell. He manages to wriggle underneath his brothers and sisters and presents them as a heavy offering to the expectant rodents, mice, rats, shrews, and what not, and within twelve hours of his existence is the supreme receptacle of death. He keeps his mouth wide open continually, which the father and mother of the departed chickens as constantly fill until his body is too big for his house, and he departs therefrom forever.

The cuckoo leaves the last week of July. He is a restless being. After leaving Europe he begins in the north of Africa and ends at the Cape of Good Hope, whence he returns to Europe in the spring. Why does he go away and why come back? Food—the food he loves—the hairy caterpillars. He will eat other grubs, but these are his hourly bread.

It has been estimated in round numbers that out of every 100 hairy caterpillars that wriggle into life 99 are devoured by cuckoos. Everywhere nature is careful to maintain her balance. The cuckoo keeps down the millions of billions of hairy caterpillars and preserves our cornfields from being eaten up by hedge sparrows. The cuckoo is a born conservative and as long as he lives returns annually to the neighborhood of his birth.—Western (England) Press.

## Self Acting Weapons.

A common story in Japan was to the effect that a Miaranma sword was once on a time pawned to a pawnbroker. The fellow thought this a fine opportunity to parade himself as a gentleman, and accordingly on a festival day he wore the sword. Quarreling with some idle fellows, he essayed to use the weapon, but his unfamiliarity with it excited the derision of the bystanders, who unmercifully ridiculed his bungling manner. But the merriment of these individuals was short lived. The sword itself took the matter in hand, as though the master impinged its own will, and soon laid low all its trainees. Then it turned against the unfortunate pawnbroker and killed him.

Another story is the basis of a popular Japanese drama and tells of the adventures of a samurai with a strange sword which he had borrowed from a pawnbroker. He lightly hit a man with the blade, without apparently wounding him in the least. Some time after the man suddenly dropped dead, and it was found that the sword had inflicted a mortal wound even when it had scarcely drawn blood. Upon examination this was found to be a Miaranma, which, though coming from a shop of the dishonest of a pawnshop and carried in the hands of an incompetent, had thus made manifest its power.

## When to Measure the Foot.

Just before going abroad one of the male leaders of New York society stepped into his bootmaker's place to get measured for several pairs of shoes for use during his tour. It was then comparatively early in the day, and the shoemaker, who prides himself upon his artistic work, asked his customer to defer the measuring of his foot until about 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

"But why not measure me over?" asked the social leader, with some annoyance.

"It is too early, sir," was the reply. "Your foot has not yet acquired its size for the day. If I measured you now the shoes would all be a little too small. Walking about on your feet as we do, sir, the feet grow deformed, even—whatever you choose to call it—from rising time till about 3 in the afternoon. At 3 they have their full size for the day. They retain this size till we retire, when they shrink up again for the night; hence to have well fitting, comfortable shoes it is necessary to be measured in the afternoon."—New York Press.

## Drove an Eighteen-in-hand.

Many years ago a well known New Yorker, one of the Livingston family, who had lived for many years in Florence, used to drive six-in-hand there every afternoon. He was a very eccentric individual and gradually increased the number of his horses until strangers in Florence would note with amazement every afternoon on the Casino a white headed gentleman driving an extraordinary procession of horses harnessed together two and two, sometimes as many as eighteen. It was one of the sights of Florence. Old Mr. Livingston toiled his team safely for a few years, but finally they bolted and ran away. Nothing could stop eighteen horses, and the sight, was something terrific. After that the authorities of Florence forbade Mr. Livingston to drive more than four, and in disgust he shook the dust of Florence from his feet and never returned.

## PADDY WHARTON'S GAL.

By C. B. LEWIS.

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There was a state of suspense in the cabin of Paddy Wharton. The man who had been station agent at Sunnerville for three years had been changed to another place down the line, and a new man had arrived.

Properly speaking, Paddy Wharton's domicile was not a cabin, but a shanty. It was a combination of grocery and boarding house and one finding no favor in the eyes of the police. Paddy himself was a man who was down on almost everything, including law and order and the railroads, and his wife was a woman with a tongue in her head. There was only one child in the Wharton family, and she was a girl of thirteen who was generally referred to as Paddy Wharton's gal.

While her father dispensed grog and swore and her mother cooked for the boarders and scolded, Rose Wharton's part in supporting the family consisted in stealing coal from the freight cars and lugging it home on her back, a bushel or so at a time. Neither the Whartons nor their gal called it stealing, but the railroad folks did. The agent had threatened Paddy's gal many and many a time, and on three or four occasions his assistant had caught her red-handed and taken her plunder away and cuffled her ears. She had even been arrested, though the judge let her go on her promise to mend her ways. Things were getting hot when the old agent left. He had set out to break up the pilfering, and Paddy Wharton's gal was returning home with an empty sack as often as with a full one.

The state of suspense was brought about by the change. It was hoped that the new agent might be a more lenient man. Winter was coming on, and Paddy had objections to buying coal. It seemed a reckless waste to pay \$5 a ton when there were carloads in the yard to be stolen.

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